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DOCUMENT ID: 33580924  
INQNO: DOC9D 00232186  
DOCNO: TEL 006005 88  
PRODUCER: BELGRADE  
SOURCE: STATE  
DOCTYPE: IN  
DOR: 19880621  
TOR: 000028  
DOCPREC: R  
ORIGDATE: 198806201349  
MHFNO: 88 9323770  
DOCCLASS: C

HEADER

RR RUEAIIB  
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH  
STU2684  
RR RUEHC  
DE RUFHBE #6005/01 1721354  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 201349Z JUN 88  
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4589  
INFO RUFHBE/AMCONSUL ZAGREB 0538  
RUFHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 2907  
RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 8537  
RUEBWJA/DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC  
BT

CONTROLS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 06005

JUSTICE FOR OSI: PATRICK TREANOR

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TEXT

TAGS: CJAN, PGOV, PREL, AU, YO  
SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV POLEMICS ON WALDHEIM

REF: (A) BELGRADE 1391, (B) BELGRADE 1296

1. (C) SUMMARY: A YUGOSLAV SPORTSWRITER, INVOLVED EARLIER THIS YEAR IN PEDDLING A FALSE DOCUMENT ABOUT KURT WALDHEIM, HAS PUBLISHED A BOOK WHICH ATTEMPTS TO DEMONSTRATE WALDHEIM'S INVOLVEMENT IN WAR CRIMES IN YUGOSLAVIA DURING WORLD WAR II. AUTHOR DANKO VASOVIC BELIEVES THAT THE ARCHIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MILITARY HISTORICAL INSTITUTE IN BELGRADE, ANTUN MILETIC, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE FALSE DOCUMENT TO YUGOSLAV HISTORIAN DUSAN PLENCA, WHO PASSED IT TO VASOVIC. BUT HE IS CONVINCED THAT MILETIC WILL NEVER BE UNCOVERED AND BROUGHT TO TRIAL, DESPITE AN INVESTIGATION WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED THAT A CRIMINAL ACT WAS INVOLVED, BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD

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IMPLICATE MILETIC'S SUPERIORS IN THE MILITARY. TOGETHER WITH RECENT NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT WALDHEIM AND A FEDERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATE'S INSISTENCE THAT THE GOY TAKE A FORMAL POSITION ON THE WALDHEIM MATTER, THE VASOVIC BOOK SERVES TO KEEP THE ISSUE IN THE PUBLIC EYE. BUT IT APPEARS THAT YUGOSLAVIA WILL OFFICIALLY MAINTAIN ITS PUBLIC DISTANCE ON THE MATTER. END SUMMARY.

THE VASOVIC BOOK  
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2. (U) ACCORDING TO AUTHOR DANKO VASOVIC, HIS JUST-RELEASED BOOK "WALDHEIM: A CAREER" ("WALDHEIM: JEDNA KARIJERA") WAS PUBLISHED IN NORWAY IN NOVEMBER 1987, BUT UNTIL NOW HE WAS UNABLE TO GET IT PUBLISHED IN YUGOSLAVIA. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THAT, EARLIER THIS YEAR, VASOVIC WAS INVOLVED WITH YUGOSLAV HISTORIAN DUSAN PLENCA IN PEDDLING TO "DER SPIEGEL" WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE A FALSE TELEGRAM, IMPLICATING AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT WALDHEIM IN DEPORTATIONS OF CIVILIANS DURING WORLD WAR II FROM BOSNIA TO PRISON OR LABOR CAMPS ELSEWHERE IN YUGOSLAVIA AND IN GERMANY AND NORWAY. IN A JUNE 9 CONVERSATION, VASOVIC TOLD POLOFF THAT, SINCE THE BOOK'S EARLIER PUBLICATION, HE HAS UPDATED THE TEXT TO COVER THE FALSE TELEGRAM INCIDENT (REFTELS). HIS LINE OF SELF-DEFENSE ON THAT ISSUE IS, SIMPLY, THAT HE NEVER SAW THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT-- AND TRUSTED HIS COLLABORATOR PLENCA.

3. (C) VASOVIC CLAIMS TO BE AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN WHY HIS BOOK WAS FINALLY PUBLISHED IN YUGOSLAVIA NOW, "VIRTUALLY OVERNIGHT." BUT HE SPECULATES THAT THERE MAY BE A CONNECTION WITH THE FACT THAT THE ANNUAL ROTATION IN THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT OF THE YUGOSLAV COLLECTIVE FEDERAL PRESIDENCY HAS JUST MOVED LAZAR MOJSOV OUT OF OFFICE. (COMMENT: MOJSOV IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN A CLOSE FRIEND OF WALDHEIM'S AND TO HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH HIM AT THE UNITED NATIONS DURING WALDHEIM'S TENURE AS SECRETARY GENERAL. MOJSOV WAS YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR TO THE UN, 1969 TO 1974, AND HE SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1977-1978. END COMMENT.)

4. (U) VASOVIC'S BOOK INCLUDES ABOUT 150 PAGES OF COPIES OF A VARIETY OF DOCUMENTS AND WARTIME PHOTOS, PLUS PICTURES OF WALDHEIM AT VARIOUS STAGES IN HIS CAREER. VASOVIC ANTICIPATES THAT PORTIONS OF HIS BOOK WILL BE CARRIED IN "DUGA" (A BI-WEEKLY BELGRADE NEWS MAGAZINE) AND PERHAPS OTHER YUGOSLAV MAGAZINES. (AT VASOVIC'S REQUEST, WE HAVE POUCHED A COPY OF HIS BOOK TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS.)

5. (U) VASOVIC ALSO COMMENTED TO POLOFF THAT HE

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WAS ASTOUNDED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RECENT HBO/THAMES TV TELEVISION "TRIAL" OF WALDHEIM, IN WHICH WALDHEIM WAS FOUND "NOT GUILTY" OF WAR CRIMES. HE CITED IN PARTICULAR REPORTS OF TESTIMONY BY THE NOW-AGED GERMAN FIRST LIEUTENANT PLUME, CHIEF OF SECTION 1-B OF THE WAR GROUP WEST BOSNIA (TO WHICH WALDHEIM WAS ALSO ASSIGNED), WHO APPARENTLY C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BELGRADE 06005

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CLAIMED THAT HIS UNIT HAD NO INVOLVEMENT WHATEVER WITH TRANSPORTATION OF CIVILIANS TO CAMPS. VASOVIC EMPHATICALLY SAID THAT AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS SHOW JUST THE OPPOSITE, AND HE POINTED TO ONE ON PAGE 338 OF HIS BOOK IN WHICH PLUME'S NAME APPEARS ALONG WITH A REFERENCE TO "TRANSPORTATION OUT OF THE COUNTRY." PLUME LIED, SAID VASOVIC.

6. (C) VASOVIC REPORTS THAT HE HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT PLENCA. PLENCA'S WIFE SAYS THAT HE IS "SOMEWHERE IN DALMATIA" (WHERE WE BELIEVE HE HAS A HOME), BUT CLAIMS NOT TO KNOW WHERE HE IS OR HOW TO REACH HIM. VASOVIC ALSO SAYS THAT HE HAS ENCOUNTERED A LOT OF DIFFICULTIES IN HIS OWN JOB AS A SPORTSWRITER FOR THE BELGRADE EVENING PAPER, VECERNJE NOVOSTI. FOR EXAMPLE, HE JUST RETURNED FROM PARIS, ONLY TO FIND THAT NONE OF HIS STORIES WERE ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION AND THAT HE HAD TO PICK UP THE TAB FOR HIS EXPENSES.

ROLE OF YUGOSLAV MILITARY?  
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7. (C) IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, VASOVIC SAID THAT HE IS CONVINCED THAT COL. ANTUN MILETIC, DIRECTOR OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE IN BELGRADE (WHOM HE HAS ALSO BEEN UNABLE TO REACH), WAS THE ONE WHO PROVIDED THE FALSE TELEGRAM TO PLENCA. HE IS ALSO SURE, HOWEVER, THAT MILETIC WILL NEVER COME TO TRIAL, DESPITE THE FACT THAT AN INVESTIGATION IS UNDERWAY. MILETIC IS A MILITARY OFFICER, VASOVIC EXPLAINS, AND WOULD NOT HAVE ACTED EXCEPT ON ORDERS FROM HIS SUPERIORS. THUS, TO PROTECT THOSE HIGHER UP THE LINE, NOTHING WILL COME OF THE INVESTIGATION, VASOVIC BELIEVES.

8. (U) COMMENT: LOCAL NEWS REPORTS INDICATE THAT A JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION HAS DETERMINED THAT A CRIMINAL ACT WAS INVOLVED IN THE FORGERY, BUT NO ONE HAS YET BEEN CHARGED. ACCORDING TO A MAY 14

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REPORT BY THE OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV NEWS AGENCY TANJUG, A BELGRADE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR TURNED OVER THE INVESTIGATION OF THE FALSE TELEGRAM TO THE MILITARY PROSECUTOR, WHO IS TO PROVIDE ANSWERS TO TWO QUESTIONS: WHO DREW UP THE FALSE DOUMENT "SERIOUSLY MARRING" WALDHEIM'S WARTIME PAST; AND WHO FALSIFIED THE SIGNATURE OF HISTORIAN PLENCA, WHO IS SHOWN IN THE ARCHIVE RECORDS AS THE PERSON WHO WITHDREW THE DOCUMENT ON WHICH THE FORGERY WAS BASED. END COMMENT.

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"POLITIKA" ARTICLES  
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9. (U) IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, A FEW DAYS AFTER VASOVIC'S BOOK BECAME AVAILABLE, THE LEADING BELGRADE DAILY "POLITIKA" CARRIED ARTICLES ON JUNE 12 AND 13 THAT POLITIKA CLAIMS PROVE THAT WALDHEIM PARTICIPATED IN WAR CRIMES DURING HIS TERM IN YUGOSLAVIA. THESE ARTICLES ARE PURPORTEDLY BASED ON "DOSSIERS" WITH WHICH POLITIKA RESEARCHERS HAVE BEEN WORKING. THE FIRST ARTICLE LINKS WALDHEIM WITH GERMAN SPECIAL PROJECTS OFFICER WILHELM APPEL WHO, LIKE WALDHEIM, WAS IN WEST BOSNIA IN THE SUMMER OF 1942 AS PART OF THE WAR GROUP WEST BOSNIA. THE ARTICLE INCLUDES A COPY OF A DOCUMENT SHOWING APPEL'S NAME AND SIGNATURE ON A LIST OF 36 CIVILIANS WHO HAD BEEN INTERROGATED AND WERE TO BE MOVED TO THE "SAJMISTE" CAMP IN ZEMUN (NEAR BELGRADE). THE ARTICLE ALSO REPORTS ON SUBSEQUENT DOCUMENTS SHOWING THEIR EVENTUAL FATE -- DEATHS, ESCAPES, TRANSFERS TO OTHER CAMPS. ALSO SHOWN IS A DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE SO-CALLED INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA, AUTHORIZING AWARDS FOR BOTH WALDHEIM AND APPEL (THE SAME DOCUMENT APPEARS IN VASOVIC'S BOOK).

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10. (U) THE SECOND ARTICLE CITES THE CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORIANS' COMMISSION WHICH INVESTIGATED  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BELGRADE 06005

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WALDHEIM ON BEHALF OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT, THAT WALDHEIM'S UNIT WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE ONLY FOR TROOP SUPPLIES BUT TRANSPORT OF PRISONERS OF WAR AS WELL. THE ARTICLE ALSO LINKS WALDHEIM WITH A GERMAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, CAPTAIN KONOPECKI. A DOCUMENT IS SHOWN BEARING KONOPECKI'S NAME, INFORMING WALDHEIM'S UNIT OF THE ARREST OF EIGHT PERSONS TO BE SENT TO DO FORCED LABOR IN GERMANY.

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ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, WALDHEIM WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT KONOPECKI BY THE HISTORIANS' COMMISSION BUT DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. THE ARTICLE CITES OTHER DOCUMENTS, ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH THAT WALDHEIM WORKED CLOSELY WITH USTASHI FORCES AGAINST THE COMMUNIST PARTISANS. IN ADDITION, IT CHARGES THAT KONOPECKI WAS INVOLVED UNTIL 1944 IN "SECRET ATTEMPTS" TO CAPTURE TITO, BUT LEVELS NO SUCH CHARGE AGAINST WALDHEIM.

COMMENT

11. IN ADDITION TO THE ARTICLES DESCRIBED ABOVE, THERE HAS ALSO BEEN RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE DEVOTED TO SENSATIONALIST STORIES (APPARENTLY EMANATING FROM THE BRITISH PRESS) ABOUT WALDHEIM ALLEGEDLY HAVING FATHERED AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD IN YUGOSLAVIA DURING THE WAR. THE JUNE 11-12 ISSUE OF THE YUGOSLAV DAILY BORBA DENOUNCED SUCH REPORTING AND CARRIED A DENIAL BY THE WOMAN SUPPOSED TO BE WALDHEIM'S DAUGHTER. ON THE MORE SERIOUS SIDE, PRESS COVERAGE IS REGULARLY GIVEN TO THE FACT THAT A SLOVENE DELEGATE TO THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY OVER A YEAR AGO POSED A "DELEGATE QUESTION" TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, DEMANDING THAT GOY TAKE A STAND ON THE WALDHEIM. SHE TELLS US SHE HAS YET TO RECEIVE OTHER THAN TEMPORIZING RESPONSES. IT THUS APPEARS LIKELY THAT YUGOSLAVIA WILL OFFICIALLY MAINTAIN ITS PUBLIC DISTANCE ON THE MATTER, OUT OF DEFERENCE TO THE VALUE IT PLACES ON GOOD RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING AUSTRIA. NEVERTHELESS, THE PUBLICATION OF VASOVIC'S BOOK AND THE RECENT "POLITIKA" ARTICLES SERVE TO KEEP THE ISSUE IN THE PUBLIC EYE--AND TO FEED CURIOSITY ABOUT WHATEVER BALKAN INTRIQUE MAY HAVE LED TO THE FALSE TELEGRAM AFFAIR.

SCANLAN

ADMIN  
END OF MESSAGE

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